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## The Right to Be Free

One of the foremost topics in the news recently has been the talk about J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI. The daily newspapers have cited instances where the FBI and its leader have attacked the work of men like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and have branded them as being Communists.

There have even been instances where investigatory wings of the government have placed civil rights leaders under constant surveillance because it was allegedly believed that these leaders were the dupes of Communist-front organizations.

One is inclined to wonder if the federal government believes that only a Communist-front group would have the courage to seek out the wrongs of the day and label them as such.

Over the years, since the end of slavery, black people have attempted to make the government keep its word relative to the promises of freedom for black people.

When the powers that be have failed in their attempts to make freedom a universal word, angry black men who felt that this nation was as much theirs as anybody else's decided to speak out about the injustice. They now have been branded, in many cases, as Communists.

To most Americans, Communist is a dirty word. Most blacks have no real knowledge of communism and, by the same token, no interest in communism.

To date, many crimes have been committed under the guise of Americanism. Men have been imprisoned and others have died. There are groups like the John Birch Society who visualize themselves as keepers of the American Freedom and, in many cases, have stated they will gladly give their lives to keep that freedom intact.

By the self-same token, American blacks want that same freedom. They have been given empty promise after empty promise and the end result has been that segregation still runs rampant today, even though there is some attempt to keep the fact hidden from the general public in many cases.

The FBI, CIA, and all the other intelligence agencies have busied themselves looking into the private

lives of men like Dr. King, who merely sought total equality for the people of this nation, as opposed to some double talk from glib politicians who used the racial problems as leverage to build their own little private empires.

Freedom is a natural thing and for a man to want to be free is a natural thing. When a man or woman is denied a job or a house in which to live, simply because his skin is black, then he does not have freedom. He is little more than a chattel.

This was what Martin Luther King Jr. was all about. He sought to stop this dastardly practice. And, for his efforts, the major crime - fighting agency in the nation inferred that he was a Communist, and when it came to light that the federal group had offered little more than token help, Mr. Hoover sought to malign the sacred memory of the man.

According to several recent books exposing the practices of the FBI, perhaps Mr. Hoover has enough information on members of the various legislative bodies to keep them in control, but he cannot contain or control an idea or an ideal.

Black men want to be free and it is their right that they should be free and all the intimidation in the world will neither stop that idea nor curtail the reality. Perhaps things will not move as swiftly as many of us would have them, but Freedom is ours. We earned it at the Boston Tea Party; in the cotton fields of Georgia; in the swamps and bayous of Louisiana; the everglades of Florida; the tobacco fields of Kentucky and Virginia; through the sweat of Harriet Tubman and Fredrick Douglass and W. E. B. DuBois and all the others. Consequently, we have no intention of giving up the fight simply because one man names the men who have led the fight as Communists.

We know no other land but this, and we will not willingly give up our birthright. And it is our birthright because the people who tilled the soil and reaped the harvest in the first days of this nation were also the people who spawned us.

We, too, have the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Only death can change that.